Stakeholder Participation in Management at the Tobago Cays Marine Park

Olando Harvey and Kenneth Williams

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Citation

Disclaimer

This report was prepared as an activity under the MPA Governance Project implemented by the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) under award NA11NOS4820012 from the NOS International Program Office (IPO), U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NOS International Program Office (IPO) or the U.S. Department of Commerce.
Introduction

Proposed Management Model

The Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) is a 66 km² non-extractive Marine Protected Area (MPA) that was established in December 1997 under the Marine Parks Act, 1997. The Marine Park Act calls for the creation of a Marine Parks Board (MPB) of ten (10) to be populated by eight (8) government agencies and two (2) NGOs that would be nominated by the government (See Appendix 3). The Marine Parks Board would be responsible for the policy level decisions of all marine parks within the jurisdiction of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). However, during the development of the now cabinet approved TCMP Management Plan (2007-2009), it became very clear that the Marine Parks Board as envisioned by the Marine Parks Act (1997) would be too removed from the daily management process to facilitate effective adaptive management. Consequently, the TCMP Management Plan called for the establishment of a Management Committee (MC) to deal exclusively with issues pertaining to the TCMP.

The Management Committee was also envisioned as having ten (10) seats; however, unlike the National Marine Parks Board, the MC would have two government agencies (namely Fisheries Div. and the Coast Guard) and eight (8) seats filled by stakeholder groups nominated by the TCMP resources users themselves (see Appendix 3 for the full list). The primary goal of this body would be to provide recommendations to the MPB to direct policy specific to the TCMP. This model was favored on the premise that the stakeholders would have a much better appreciation of the situations on the ground, borne from their daily activities, than representatives of government agencies on the mainland, some of whom may have never been to the TCMP.

Current Management Reality

Owing primarily to the fact that the TCMP remains the only legislated Marine Park in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the organizational structure proposed by the TCMP Management Plan (2007 - 2009) has not fully materialized. Currently, the MPB consists of the eight (8) government agencies explicitly indicated in the Marine Parks Act (1997) along with two (2) NGOs (i.e. The Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association (SGWTA) and Union Island Ecological Society (UIES)). The TCMP MC as envisioned in the management plan has never been implemented. This can be attributed principally to the fact that most of the primary stakeholder groups, which are recommended to hold a seat at the MC table, not having formal organizations (e.g. associations or cooperatives) to represent their sector.
**Rationale**

Recent developments with the Marine Parks regime, namely, the initiative to upgrade the South Coast Marine Conservation Area (currently a fisheries conservation area) to full Marine Park status, has once again brought the importance of operationalizing the TCMP MC to the forefront. More specifically, the addition of a second Marine Park into the MPA system would necessitate changing the structure of the management regime, especially at the MPB level. The MPB would have to be reorganized to equitably represent the fact that there is more than one MPA within the marine park system. This inevitably means that the NGOs (i.e. SGWTA & UIES) who are currently at the MPB table would have to be restructured to represent this change, as these two NGOs are specific to the TCMP context. Once this happens, the conditions for which the TCMP MC was envisioned to prevent would have materialized. That is, to ensure the issues on the ground in the TCMP are effectively presented to the decision making body (i.e. MPB).

Consequently, this study was designed to fulfill three primary objectives (see Appendix 1 for original project design):

1) assess the current level of stakeholder participation in the governance at the TCMP.
2) determine what motivates the stakeholder groups that are currently engaged in the governance mechanism to continue to participate in the process
3) assess the level of willingness of stakeholder groups that are not currently engaged in management to become part of the governance mechanism for the TCMP.

**Methodology**

*Questionnaire Development and Enumerator Preparation*

Two persons were selected to be enumerators, based on their prior experience in administering questionnaires within a very similar format. They were briefed on the objectives of the study; that is, what the data would be utilized for and how they should approach its collection. They were then given the stakeholder lists and instructed on the number of questionnaires that they were to administer to each stakeholder group. The enumerators were in constant contact with each other throughout the questionnaire administration process, to ensure that no person was interviewed twice.

*Sample Selection*

The eight (8) stakeholder groups that were identified for participation in the Management Committee, as identified in the TCMP Management Plan (2007- 2009), formed the population for this study. Using this as the starting point, a list of the individuals within these eight
stakeholder groups was generated. To add a component of anonymity, these lists were then given to the two (2) enumerators who conducted twenty one (21) questionnaire surveys with different stakeholders. The enumerators were then instructed to conduct a specific number of questionnaire surveys for each stakeholder group, utilizing a stratified random sampling method (see Appendix 2 for specific numbers).

**Stakeholder Interviews**

Once the specific stakeholders were selected by the enumerators, the next activity was to obtain insight into the perceptions of the different sectors within the Tobago Cays Marine Park. To accomplish this, the questionnaires were administered (see Appendix 4 for a complete list of questions). This was accomplished by the enumerator reading the question to the interviewee and carefully recording his/her response to each response. In the event that the interviewee refused to answer or could not answer a question, the enumerator indicated that there was a no response to that particular question. Time and weather constraints necessitated that respondents be limited to only individuals on Union Island (particularly for fishers) and the Tobago Cays. The questions presented to the interviewees may be categorized into three themes:

1. The awareness of the current TCMP Management System.
2. Their perceptions on the effectiveness of the current management system.
3. The willingness of their sector to participate in Governance.

**Data Analysis**

While the questionnaires were being administered, a coding scheme was developed utilizing Microsoft Office Excel to allow for analysis of the data, once it was collected. Once the questionnaires were collected, they were entered into a data table utilizing the coding scheme that was developed earlier. The data table was used to conduct a series of analysis between and amongst the different stakeholder groups, the results of which are presented in the next section.
Results

This pie chart highlights the fact that 91.67 percent of interviewees consider themselves to be stakeholders of the TCMP, while 8.33 percent do not identify themselves as being stakeholders.

![Pie chart illustrating interviewee perceptions](image1)

**Figure 1 Interviewee perceptions**

Figure 2 shows that 64 percent of persons surveyed indicated that, in their opinion, co-management body (i.e. government along with stakeholders) should be responsible for managing the TCMP. 27 percent believe that the government alone should manage the TCMP and 9 percent believe that it should be the sole responsibility of stakeholders.

![Pie chart illustrating who should manage the TCMP](image2)

**Figure 2 Who should manage the TCMP**
This chart shows that 64% of those surveyed are of the opinion that they have some form of influence over the way the TCMP is managed; 27% believe that they have absolutely no influence in the way it is managed, and 9% believe they have complete influence on how the MPA is managed.

![Stakeholder Influence on Management](image)

*Figure 3 Stakeholder influence on management*

We found that 91.67% of the persons surveyed indicated that they think the MPA is currently being effectively managed. Conversely, the other 8.33% believe that it is not being effectively managed, because there are still areas of enforcement that require improvement.

![Management Effectiveness](image)

*Figure 4 Management effectiveness*
92% of the persons surveyed indicated that they were aware of the objectives of the TCMP, while the other respondents did not respond.

![Knowledge of MPA Objectives](image)

**Figure 5 Knowledge of TCMP Objectives**

### Discussion

**Conceptual Underpinning of stakeholder participation**

It is of critical importance to explore the concept of “stakeholder” and “stakeholder participation”, in order to achieve a full understanding of the implication of including stakeholders on the MPA decision making process, by operationalizing the TCMP Management Committee as envisioned in the 2007 - 2009 Management Plan.

Freeman, (1984: 46) defines stakeholder as “*any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.*”

Achterkamp and Vos (2008) has taken the definition of stakeholders a bit further by classifying stakeholders into two categories; those who hold the “potential for collaboration” or those with the “potential for threatening.” Utilizing these two typologies of “the collaborator” and “the inhibitor”, Achterkamp and Vos attempts to refine the notion of stakeholder into an archetype that is readily applicable to environmental management. In other words, there are two distinct groups of people that must be considered when embarking on any form of resources management: the “influencer” and the “stakeholder.” An “influencer” possesses power over an organization, irrespective of having a valid claim/stake; conversely, a “stakeholder” may have a
legitimate claim but lacks the power to influence the decision-making body (Mitchell et al., 1997). The primary objective of stakeholder participation in resources management is to tip the balance back into the hands of those who stand to be affected, albeit negatively or positively, by any management options. Once this is successfully accomplished, the list of “collaborators” outweighs that of the “inhibitors.” This has significant implications with regard to legitimacy, stakeholder buy-in and ultimately the overall success of an MPA.

The most frequently cited excuse for keeping stakeholders to the periphery of the participatory policy-making process, such as MPA management, is that stakeholders possess insufficient capacity to meaningfully contribute to policy. That is, stakeholders lack the understanding of the complexity of the issues involved or the implication of policy choices, especially when the evidence base for that policy is scientific (Fletcher, 2007). However, stakeholder participation can and should occur at the level at which the capacity of the stakeholders facilitate, since, stakeholder engagement is a process directed at increase legitimacy of decisions through the participation of the affected groups (Holzer, 2008). According to Fletcher (2007), there are three fundamental questions pertaining to stakeholder participation:

1. Who should be included?
2. At what stage in the policy-making process should participation occur?
3. What form of participation should occur?

**TCMP Context**

Due to the longstanding paradigm of government lead resources management that has existed throughout the Caribbean, stakeholder participation in resource management, including MPAs, is a relatively new concept. Stakeholders have typically been included in environmental management at the implementation stage; consequently, this often results in the needs and priorities of stakeholders frequently differing from the objectives of these resource management initiatives (Reed, 2008).

Within the context of the TCMP, efforts were made in the inception of the MPA designation process, to include all legitimate stakeholders into the process. However, some critical seats were left vacant at these meetings; for example, that of Grenadines Fishers. Their absence can be attributed mainly to the fact that during the period of the “stakeholder consultations, there was no formal fisher folk organization in the Grenadines. Fortunately, one such organization has since materialized in the form of the Union Island Fisher Folk Cooperative, and they are primed and ready to occupy a seat on the TCMP MC. Through the efforts of the Sustainable Grenadines Inc., a transboundary NGO operating within the Grenadines (both Vincentian and Grenadian Grenadines), there have been significant strides towards establishing formal stakeholder groups which would allow them to participate fully in management.
The survey has identified a significant disconnect with regards to the management of the TCMP; namely, the fact that more than sixty (60) percent of the water taxi operator that were surveyed were not aware that they currently have a representative on the national Marine Park Board. This represents the fact that information is not flowing effectively up and down the ranks of this stakeholder organization. This provides critical insight as it could affect the legitimacy of the representation process and holds the potential to undermine the entire stakeholder participation process.

Over ninety (90) percent of respondents surveyed indicated that there are “advantages/benefits” to stakeholder groups participating in the management of the TCMP; however, in most of the cases they were unable to identify why or how they benefit. As a result of this, we are unable to definitively determine what motivates the stakeholder groups that are currently continually engaged in the management process.

We found that approximately ninety two (92) percent of the persons surveyed indicated that they were of the opinion that the overall TCMP is currently being effectively managed along with all the commercial activities. They noted however, that there remains room for improvement especially with regards to enforcement.

Ninety two (92) percent of respondents indicated that they were aware on the objectives of the park, which can point to the fact that the public awareness campaign of the TCMP is having some impact and the message is getting to its intended targets.

It is also very important to note that sixty four (64) percent of those surveyed were of the opinion that the TCMP should be managed in coordination with the various users/stakeholder groups. This coupled with the fact that over eighty (80) percent of respondents indicated that they or a representative of the user groups would be interested in being part of the TCMP Management Committee.

When we combine the fact that approximately 92% of the persons surveyed indicated that they were aware of objectives of the TCMP, and that, in their opinion, the park is being managed effectively, indicates that the current TCMP management team is moving in the right direction with regards to implementing the current management plan.

In conclusion, the overall benefit of stakeholder participation in management planning and implementation, as is envisage in the establishment of a TCMP MC, would materialize when the insight of the various user/stakeholder groups bring their unique perspectives developed over generations of resources utilization. Once these unique perspectives are synthesised into a unified vision, it would allow for the most resilient and adaptive TCMP.

**Key Learning**

1. There are persons who are affected by the management actions of the TCMP but do not consider themselves to be stakeholders of the TCMP.

2. There are members of the Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association (SGWTA) who are unaware that they are currently represented on the national Marine Parks Board.
3. The majority of stakeholders believe that over all the TCMP is currently being effectively managed; however, they noted there is a lot of room for improvement, especially with regard to enforcement.

4. Most stakeholders think that they should be partly responsible for managing the TCMP.

5. Over 80 percent of the persons surveyed indicated that they, personally or a representative of their stakeholder group, would like to be part of the TCMP Management Committee.

References


Appendix 1

Adaptive capacity for MPA governance in the eastern Caribbean: Follow-up Activity Form

Please complete all sections and submit as an email attachment to Patrick.mcconney@cavehill.uwi.edu

1. Contact information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop #</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Theme of activity</th>
<th>Adaptive Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of activity</td>
<td>Stakeholder Participation in Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Tobago Cays Marine Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/location</td>
<td>Clifton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area/parish</td>
<td>Union Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity leader</td>
<td>Kenneth Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of post held</td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone(s)</td>
<td>(784) 485 8191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facsimile(s)</td>
<td>(784) 485 8192</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address(es)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:manager@tobagocays.org">manager@tobagocays.org</a>/landokeri@yahoo.com</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype name(s)</td>
<td>Landokeri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will use e-mail for most communication so give addresses that are reliable and are checked regularly. Type responses in the boxes below and they will expand to fit the text. Try to be concise but very clear.

2. What is the purpose/objective of your activity related to adaptive capacity for MPA governance? (<100 words)

To assess the current level of stakeholder participation in the governance of the TCMP. More specifically, we would examine/determine:

1. The drivers for participation in the management process by those that are currently engaged in the MPA governance.
2. The benefits of having these stakeholders participation in governance.
3. The willingness of stakeholder groups to participate in governance.

This would provide the management of the TCMP with insights that can be used to engage stakeholder groups that are not actively involved in governance.

3. What specific (measurable, verifiable) outputs will you achieve by the end of the activity? (3-5 bullet points)

- Comprehensive stakeholder list.
- List of benefits and drivers for participation in MPA management.
- Strategy for strengthening stakeholder participation in governance.
- Strategy for engaging stakeholder groups that are willing to participate in governance but are not currently involved.
4. What is your scheduled work plan and budget for the 1-4 week activity? (Insert or delete rows as necessary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task description (major tasks to be accomplished for deliverables)</th>
<th>Wk1</th>
<th>Wk2</th>
<th>Wk3</th>
<th>Wk4</th>
<th>Cost (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development &amp; Printing of Semi-structured interview Guides</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of stakeholders</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interviews/focus group (1 per stakeholder group)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation to Mayreau &amp; Canouan for interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report preparation (Draft)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Validation Meetings with stakeholders; Mayreau &amp; Union Is. (venue, transportation &amp; refreshments)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start date: January 23rd, 2012  
End date: Feb 17th, 2012  
Total budget for activity = 950.00

5. In the table below list the critical resources or stakeholders in the activity and their roles. (Insert or delete rows)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical resource or stakeholder identified</th>
<th>Role in implementing the activity or specific tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial resources</td>
<td>Cover implementation costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>Primary instrument for assessing participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olando Harvey and Kenneth Williams</td>
<td>Data analysis and report preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumerators</td>
<td>Survey administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders (availability)</td>
<td>Target audience for information collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Are there any assumptions or circumstances that may impact on successful implementation? (<100 words)
Stakeholders are willing and available to participate in the survey within our time frame

7. If you are not authorised to sign follow-up agreements on behalf of your organisation, identify the person who is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorised person</th>
<th>Kenneth Williams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of post held</td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Any other pertinent information (<100 words)

Submitted to CERMES on (dd/mm/yy)  20/01/12  By (name)  Olando Harvey

The completed form is not expected to exceed three pages in length. Thank you.
## Appendix 2

Table highlighting the number of questionnaires that were administered to each stakeholder group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders (1°)</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Taxi Operators</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendors</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dive Operators</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Tour Operators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yacht Companies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3
An organizational Chart showing both the National Marine Park Board and the TCMP Management Committee along with the TCMP Staff.

Marine Parks (National Level, Nominated by Government)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>TCMP Site Implementation Entity (Local Level, Nominated by TCMP Users)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Grenadines Affairs</td>
<td>Nominee of Grenadines Fishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominee of Ministry of</td>
<td>Nominee of TCMP Yachters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenadines Affairs</td>
<td>Nominee of TCMP Dive Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm. Of Coast Guard or Nominee</td>
<td>Nominee of TCMP Day Charter Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of</td>
<td>Nominee of TCMP Water Taxi Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenadines Affairs</td>
<td>Nominee of TCMP Vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominee of NGOs (1)</td>
<td>Nominee of Grenadines Hoteliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominee of NGOs (2)</td>
<td>Nominee of Mayreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheif Fisheries Officer</td>
<td>Local Rep. of Fisheries Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir. Of Finance or nominee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor General or Nominee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operational Manager *  
OPAAL Site Coordinator *

Warden *  
Administrator

Accounting Assistant  
Marine Biologist *

Asst. Project Coordinator *

Rangers
Office Attendant

* Members of the Mgmt Committee
Stakeholder Participation in Governance
Stakeholder Surveys

This survey is being done by the Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) so as to improve how the TCMP is being managed. You would not be identified in any reports and any information that you provide cannot be traced back to you. After this survey is completed, a copy of the report would be made available to you.

Date:_______________         Key Informant Stakeholder group: __________________________

1.  Sex:  Male (   ) Female (   )
2.  Age: Under 30 (  )  30 -40 (  )  41- 50 (  )  Over 50 (  )
3.  What is your Primary occupation?    ______________
4.  How long have you been in your current occupation?  __________
5.  Do you know the objectives of the TCMP?  Yes (  )  No (  ); please explain your answer
______________________________________________________________________________
6.  How often do you go to the TCMP? _______________
7.  Is your business affected by the management of the TCMP? Yes (  ) No (  ); please explain your answer:
______________________________________________________________________________
8.  Do you consider yourself to be a stakeholder of the TCMP?  Yes (  )  No (  )  Please Explain:
______________________________________________________________________________
9.  Who in your opinion should be responsible for managing the park?
______________________________________________________________________________
10. Are you or any member of your organization part of the TCMP board of Directors?
Yes ( ) No ( ) not sure ( ); if yes who are they?

11. In your opinion, are there any benefits/advantages to your stakeholder group being part of the TCMP board? Yes ( ) No ( ); if yes, can you list a few?

12. Do you know any of the members of the current TCMP Board and their role in the MPA management? Yes ( ) No ( ); If yes please list them?

13. Who should have the most responsibility for taking decisions about managing the TCMP?

14. How much influence do you think your stakeholder group has in how the TCMP is managed?

15. Would your involvement in the management board improve the management of the Park?

   Yes ( ) No ( ); please explain your answer:

16. Have you ever participated in any meetings, workshops or other events organized by the TCMP? Yes ( ) Describe? ; No ( ) Why?

17. Do you think the park is being managed effectively? Yes ( ) No ( ); please explain your answer:

18. Are the commercial activities (vending, diving, water taxi etc.) in the park effectively managed? Yes ( ) describe? ; No ( ) Why?

19. Would you or your stakeholder group be interested in being part of the TCMP board? Yes ( ) No ( ); if no, why not:

20. What in your opinion can be done to get your stakeholder group to become part of the management board?

   Thank you for your help!